

"SCIENCE OF LIVING" SERIES—VI

Preksha Dhyana : Perception of Psychic Centres

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Publisher's Note

In publishing this booklet, it is hoped to bring to the reader, in simple language, some of the truths, already known to the ancient philosophies, and now known to modern science

Age of Tension

In this age of technology, industrialisation and over-urbanisation, we are constantly subjected to tremendous stresses and tensions. These, in turn, produce psychosomatic diseases like hypertension, insomnia, and various types of heart diseases. In desperation, people take to drinking and dangerous drugs which give temporary relief, but create more serious problems. The remedy does not lie in drugs or fantasy, but in the process of catharsis and development of the inherent powers.

Philosophy teaches us to realise that our existence is functioning in duality, i.e. there is a spiritual self within a physical body. Science is also proving that life's processes for man lie almost wholly within himself and are amenable to control. The control has to be exercised by the power of the spiritual self, and that inherent potency can be developed by knowing how to live properly, which includes eating, drinking and breathing properly as well as thinking properly.

What is Prekṣā-dhyāna ?

Prekṣā-dhyāna is a technique of meditation for attitudinal change, behavioural modification and integrated development of personality. It is based on the wisdom of ancient philosophy and has been formulated in terms of modern scientific concepts. We hope that the synthesis of the ancient wisdom and the modern scientific knowledge would help us in achieving the blissful aim of establishing amity, peace and happiness in the world by eradicating the bestial urges such as cruelty, retaliation and hate.

The different methods of *prekṣā* (i.e. perception) include *śvāsa prekṣā* (perception of breathing), *śarīra-prekṣā* (perception of body), *chaitanya-kendra-prekṣā* (perception of psychic centres), etc. All these are methods of ultimate transformation in inner consciousness. Here, there is no need to sermonize for adopting virtues and giving up evils. When one starts practising perception, one experiences himself that he is changing, that anger and fear are pacifying, that one is getting transformed into a 'righteous' person.

Our series on "Science of Living" includes tracts on various facets of *prekṣā-dhyāna*. In this booklet perception of psychic centres is discussed in details. Every man wishes to develop his personality and become a good man. But the question is—What is the process by which one can develop an integrated personality? The answer is—perception of psychic centres. It is a process of harmonizing one's endocrine system and thereby achieving the development of integrated personality.

There are certain portions in our body where psychic energy is more concentrated than the other parts. These, therefore, are psychic centres. Perception of psychic centres, means "focusing of full attention on these centres, and meditation of these centres with concentration". These centres, are associated with ductless glands which are situated at these places and are called "endocrines". The endocrines exert profound influence on mental states and behaviour of an individual.

One of the main purposes of meditation is to eradicate evil from the way of life, behaviour and attitude of a person. The question is: Why do the attitude and behaviour get vitiated in the first place? What controls these personality factors? What are the regulators and how do they regulate? It has now been established by scientific research that every mental and emotional event is linked to hormones and neuro-hormones produced by the specialised nerves, hypothalamus and the endocrines. A whole new nervous system based on chemical substances is being mapped out in laboratories all over the world. Systematic meditation prescribing concentration on psychic centres, i.e. concentrated perception of endocrine glands and certain

portions of the brain, gives the average person a safe means of controlling his moods and altering behaviour too. It could teach practical methods of treating emotional disorders and drug addictions. For a lasting change of attitude and behaviour, one must transmute the synthesization of the hormones. Same is the case for a permanent control of one's moods and altering one's way of life-transmutation of hormonal synthesization. Perception of psychic centres is a safe, practical, easy-to-learn technique for obtaining these results

Benefits of *Preksā-dhyāna*

Preksā may appear to mean different things to different people because it contributes to increase physical, nervous as well as spiritual energies.

On physical level, it helps each bodily cell to revitalize itself, it facilitates digestion, it makes respiration more efficient and improves circulation and quality of blood; strengthens immune-system.

On mental level, it proves to be an applied method to train the mind to concentrate, it cleans and relaxes the mind, it offers a way to treat serious psychosomatic illnesses without drugs, it is an efficient tool for ending addictions and other bad habits, it reveals to one the mysteries of his mind by the realization and the real experience of the inner consciousness which includes the subconscious and the unconscious.

On the emotional level, the strengthening of conscious reasoning controls reactions to environmental conditions, situations, and behaviour of others; harmonization of the functioning of nervous and endocrine systems results in control and ultimate eradication of psychological distortions.

On spiritual level, the firm control of the reasoning mind, regulation and transformation of blood-chemistry through proper synthesization of neuro-endocrinal secretions, and production of dispassionate internal vibrations lead one to attain the power to control the mind, and to become free from the effects of external forces compelling one to lose equanimity.

No Theological Dogma

Prekṣā-dhyāna can be learnt and practised by anybody without distinction of caste, colour, country and creed. There is no communal or theological bias, nor does it insist on any particular theological belief.

Though the process is not very difficult to learn and practise, it is essential to learn the technique through experienced and trained teachers. Normally a ten-day retreat (training camp) is a suitable means to acquire proper training.

Review of Results

During the last ten years, 56 training camps have been organised and more than 6500 persons have been oriented in this technique. Amongst them are scientists, doctors, engineers, professors, government servants and other intelligentsia, besides the general public. Police Department, Education Department and others have taken part in the special courses organised by Tulsī Adhyatma Nīdam. More such courses are being planned for different disciplines, professions and work areas. Over and above those who have been trained in these camps, thousands of others have practised *prekṣā-dhyāna* and have been benefited thereby. While many of them have restored their physical health, hundreds of others have been cured of mental tensions, hypertension and other psychosomatic diseases.

For all these, we are grateful to Yugapradhana Acharya Shri Tulsī and his successor-designate Yuvacharya Shri Mahaprajna for their constant guidance and efforts in this direction.

These two great spiritual saints have truly blessed the entire human race with the boon of *prekṣā-dhyāna*, and we are confident that all and sundry will be benefited by learning and practising this universal and easy-to-learn technique of *prekṣā-dhyāna*.

Three permanent training centres have been established viz 1. Tulsī Adhyatma Nīdam at Jain Vīshva Bharatī,

Ladnun, (Rajasthan) 2. Adhyatma Sadhna Kendra at Mehrauli, New Delhi. and 3. Tulsi Sadhana Shikhar at Rajsamand (Rajasthan).

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1 May, 1989

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Introduction

Meditation has been routinely practised in both eastern and western countries throughout all ages. Nevertheless, it was believed to be a highly ritualistic performance practised by specially qualified persons. The purpose of meditation throughout history, appears to have been to attain transcendental experience which corresponded to religion (or philosophy) in which it was rooted, that is, it meant for many people some mystic experience involving theological ritual.

Development of life-sciences came much later than that of natural sciences. Here also, physiology—science of body developed first while psychology—science of mind developed later. Until very recently endocrinology (science of the endocrines—the ductless glands) was a little known branch of life-sciences. Recent advance of modern science in this field has revealed that the secretions from endocrines have tremendous influence on human nature and behaviour. Through the growth of our knowledge in psychology, we are able to understand the (psychological) roots of internal fear, hate, cruelty and such other emotional distortions. The analysis of human mind with the discovery of its power of projection and its hidden sub-conscious components make it unnecessary to ascribe mere mystical and ritual form to meditation. And with the substitution of knowledge for ignorance in the field of co-ordinatory neuro endocrine systems and their profound influence upon the mental states and tendencies of an individual, myths and superstitions about meditation are being replaced with scientifically established facts.

It is now recognised that meditation is not an irrational, emotional or religious experience but a deliberate mental operation of psychoanalysis.

Today, eminent doctors, specialists and general practi-

tioners alike, have realised that meditation is a powerful tool, both for healing and maintaining good health. Irrefutable scientific proofs now available show that meditation and consciously achieved total relaxation can cure and prevent any number of diseases which are caused by tension and stress. Scientific investigations have provided evidence that regular practice of meditation positively influences the control mechanism which is ultimately responsible for the homeostasis in the body. It produces a more balanced equilibrium between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic components of the autonomic nervous system. The benefits of meditational practice are measurable and can be obtained by anybody who cares to learn the technique and practise it regularly.

Improvement of physical health and cure (and prevention) of serious illnesses without injurious drugs, though valuable contribution, is not the only or even the chief objective of meditation. It is, in reality, the apparatus for controlling one's irrational instincts of anger, aggression, cruelty, vindictiveness and fear. It is a tool for awakening and developing one's attitude and behaviour to be truly worthy of a human being. It is a "process of remedying inner incompleteness and reducing inner discord" as aptly stated by William James. The main objective of meditation is, thus, not to acquire physical goodness but to acquire total psychical goodness by eradicating all evil from one's thoughts, speech and action.

Meditation is a form of psychotherapy for destroying the repressing and repressed forces which have produced and would continue to produce inhuman tendencies, and irrational behaviour if not destroyed. Eradication of these forces would enable us to develop our true human nature and justify our claim of being the highest product of the cosmic process.

We now know that the irrational instincts and impulses emanate from the endocrines, and not from the brain. They not only generate feelings but also demand approp-

riate action to satisfy the need. All the impelling forces are produced by the endocrine secretions called hormones. Hormones have profound influence upon the mental states and tendencies, behavioural patterns as well as emotions of an individual. Frequent emotional stresses result in psychological distortions and irrational behaviour. It follows from this that for rational development of various personality factors, it is necessary to transmute the synthesization of the chemical messengers—hormones & neuro-hormones. It has been established by the use of the bio-feedback and other scientific measuring equipments that meditation has the power to alter the electrical activity of the chemical messengers. Regular practice of perception of these psychic centres will (a) immensely strengthen the power of the unique human attribute—rational thinking and conscious reasoning, and (b) weaken the forces of irrational impulses and primal drives. The cumulative effect of this two-fold transformation would ultimately eradicate the psychological distortions and irrational behaviour.

The scientific approach, however, should not be interpreted as viewing the age-old wisdom of philosophy to be entirely false or useless, for just as theological dogma cannot negate findings of science, no scientific discovery can ever negate an eternal truth. The significance of philosophical wisdom lies in the fact that the realisation of truth is not an inference of intelligence but a matter of experience, i.e. the truth must be realised by one's own efforts. And hence modern sciences and ancient philosophy together can pave the way for more truths and knowledge which may be woven into wisdom and used for the belief of mankind. All that is necessary is that the ancient methodology and interpretation of philosophical wisdom be expanded, modified and re-stated in modern scientific terms. And the integrated wisdom thus obtained could be used to purify the vitiated and distorted tendencies of man. It would then enable men and women to learn to gain mastery over their bestial urges and attain compassion, bliss and happiness.

In the following chapters modern science and ancient philosophy are used together to emphasize the importance of the Perception of Psychic Centres.

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1

Psychic Centres : Scientific Version

Every living organism survives and functions because it is composed of a number of systems working together as a team. A system may be defined as a group of structures or organs which carry out an essential fundamental function by working together. Although, to some extent, each system works and can be considered on its own, the various systems are closely connected and are dependent on each other. Many of the activities are controlled by the nervous system and one of the characteristics of this system is the rapidity of its response to various kinds of stimuli. There is, however, a second major system which exercises control over the body's activities. The organs of this second system are called the endocrines. Thus the nervous system and the endocrine system are the two major controlling and coordinating systems of our body. They coordinate the work of other systems and through them control the functions of the body as a whole. Both are intimately associated with each other and, together, integrate the organism. The functional interlocking between both qualifies them to be regarded as constituting a single integrated system called "neuroendocrine system".

The endocrine glands communicate their orders through chemical regulators called hormones. A hormone may be defined as a chemical messenger, secreted by the bloodstream to its target cells in distant organs, which it is thereby able to influence. Some hormones, such as adrenalin, have an immediate action. Others exercise their influence over many years. They not only participate in all bodily functions, but exert profound influence on the

mental states, emotions and behavioural patterns of an individual also. They generate the powerful forces of passions and emotions in man. These, in turn, generate feelings and demand appropriate action that satisfies the need. Love, hate, fear etc are endocrine expressions.

For a long time it was believed that the brain was the source of energy and the seat of impulses of man. Significant progress in endocrinology (branch of science dealing with endocrine system) in the recent years has established that the passions and emotions are expressions of the endocrine system.

Endocrine system is the seat of habit formation in a person. They manifest themselves in the nervous system and become behavioural pattern. Thus manifestation and behaviour are the functions of the nervous system, but the birth-place—the production centre of the habits—is endocrine system. The same habits are then stored in the brain as memories (i.e. the brain is only the repository of memories), and ultimately become patterns of behaviour. The word neuro-endocrine system is very apt to describe the integration of both systems.

The intimate reciprocal relationship between the two systems can be illustrated as under. The visual stimulus of the beauty of a pretty girl causes electric nerve impulses to activate the anterior pituitary of young male, within the hypothalamus (that part of the brain which is attached to the pituitary by vascular and neural pathway) as a probable intermediary. The pituitary, in turn, produces and delivers gonadotrophin hormone to the sexual gland. The nerve and hormone signals make his nerve beat faster, increase blood-pressure, tense muscles and cause sexual arousal.

Unlike continuous anatomical structures of most of the other systems of the body, the glands of the endocrine system are scattered through the body like islands. The major endocrine gland may be arranged in three groups.

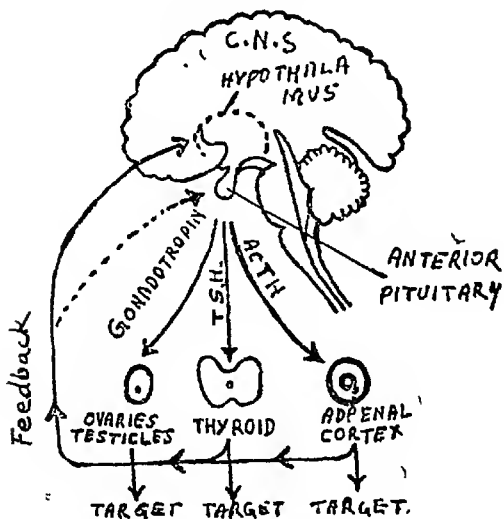
- (1) (a) The anterior pituitary
- (b) The adrenal cortex

- (c) The thyroid gland
- (d) The sex glands or gonads
- (2) (a) The posterior pituitary
- (b) The adrenal medulla
- (c) The parathyroid
- (d) Islets of langerhans
- (3) (a) Pineal
- (b) Thymus

The anterior pituitary controls the other members of the first group through the trophic hormones which it secretes. The glands of the second group are controlled by other stimuli both chemical and neural. The third group is a unique independent group

All these glands are comparatively small, ductless and have access to very rich vascular supply. They produce organic chemical compounds called hormones which reach their targets through blood stream. They are effective in very small quantities. They regulate such important body-processes as growth and development, sexual activity,

Fig 1



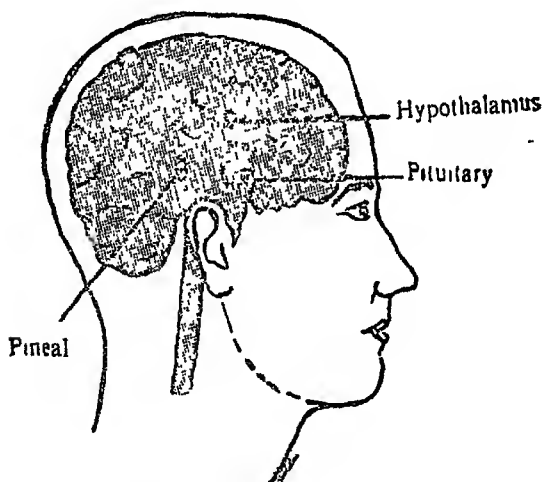
pregnancy and birth and metabolism

A variety of trophic hormones secreted by the pituitary reach other glands via the blood-stream and stimulate each to secrete specific hormones in definite quantities. Through a feedback system of chemical inter-communication, pituitary regulates the hormone production of the other glands.

1. The Pineal Gland

This gland lies near the centre of the brain. It is very small, not much larger than a gram of wheat. It is hidden away at the base of the brain in a tiny cave behind and above the pituitary gland.

Fig. II



An important effect of the pineal secretion is to inhibit the gonads activity, until puberty, thus holding the sex in abeyance, during childhood. Later on, it aids in the maturing processes of sex after puberty. Some experimental evidence indicates that pineal hormones inhibit ACTH secretion and thus indirectly help to regulate the secretions of the adrenal gland, via the hypothalamus and pituitary.

2 The Pituitary Gland

The pituitary gland is situated almost exactly in the centre of the head at the base of the brain and just behind the root of the nose (See. fig II) It hangs suspended from the underside of the brain in a little cup or cradle It is about the size of a pea (about 1 cm in diameter).

This gland has an anterior and a posterior part, which have entirely different functions Both are under the control of the hypothalamus, but by different mechanisms The anterior part is controlled by releasing and inhibiting factors which are secreted by the hypothalamus It produces no less than six distinctly different hormones and is concerned with the multiplicity of the vital processes No part of the body is exempt from its influence It produces hormones which stimulate and regulate the activities of the thyroid, adrenal cortex and sex glands.

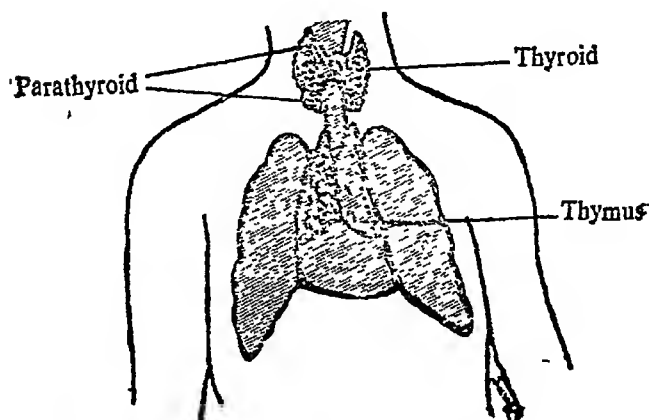
A neural mechanism between the hypothalamus and the posterior part controls the latter The hormones released by the posterior part are produced in the adjoining hypothalamus, they are stored, possibly modified and distributed by the gland as needed.

3. The Thyroid Gland

The thyroid gland is situated in the lower part of the neck It consists of two masses astride the upper end of the trachea as in fig III The two parts are connected with a strip of the same tissue just below the Adam's apple The vascular supply to this gland is exceptionally rich, i.e. it receives four times as much blood as do the kidneys Thyroxine is the main secretion of this gland, but is itself relatively inactive. The active hormone is tri-iodo thyroxine and, by its action on cells, it regulates the basal metabolic rate and influences growth and maturation. Besides the large percentage of iodine which the gland traps from the blood, it also contains iron, arsenic and phosphorus. It is the builder of the nerve and brain tissues. Thyroid gland is essentially an energy regulating

organ and its output controls the rate of metabolism or the speed of living, also it aids digestion. combats the poison in the body, gives balance to the brain, regulates protein, carbohydrate and fat metabolism and cures and prevents goitre.

Fig III



4. The Parathyroid Glands

The Parathyroid glands are four minute ovoid bodies, smaller than peas, embedded in the lobes of the thyroid glands. (See fig. III). The hormone secreted by these glands is called parathormone (PTH). Its action sets the long term blood calcium level which is essential for the normal function of the cells and decreases the phosphate concentration. The hormone is secreted in self-regulating feedback system independent of pituitary control.

5. The Thymus Gland

The thymus gland is situated in the chest between the two lungs, rests on the upper portion of the heart and extends up into the neck (See fig. III). It grows rapidly during the first two or three years of the child's life and it gradually disappears after the 20th year. Some secretion-cells, however, remain throughout life. This gland is believed to control the physical growth of children upto

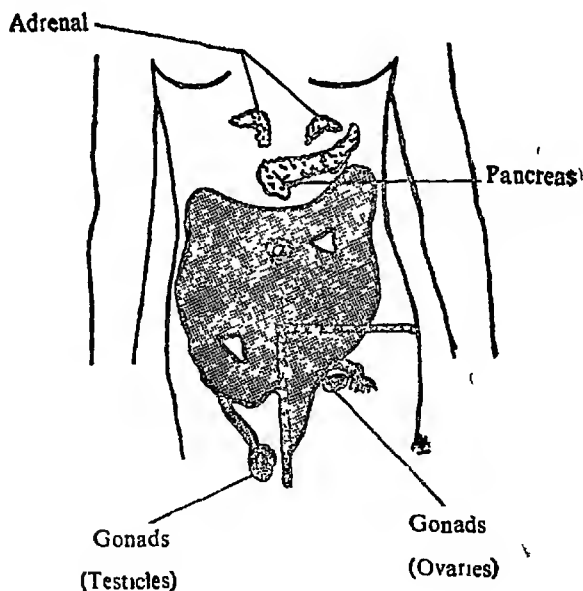
the 14th year of age. During this time it holds other glands particularly the sex glands in check and delays puberty and furthers normal brain development.

The thymus is a lymphoid organ since it contains closely packed lymphocytes. Besides the function mentioned above the thymus exerts an influence on the lymph-nodes, spleen and other lymphatic tissues so that they too gain the ability to produce lymphocytes and foster the development of immuno-competent cells (T-cells) by means of a hormone.

6. The Adrenal Glands

The adrenals are a pair of small, flattened, yellowish, three-cornered glands capping the upper end of the kidneys (See fig IV). Each adrenal is a double gland composed of a cortex—an outer layer and a medulla—an inner layer, former making up the bulk of the gland. Each part

Fig. IV



has entirely separate function. The amount of blood passing through the adrenals is very great compared to their size

More than three dozen hormones are produced by these glands. A number of these are essential to life. They stimulate the healthy growth of the brain and sex cells, develop mental concentration and physical endurance and generate a vigorous muscular and nervous constitution.

The profuse sympathetic nerve supply goes almost entirely to the medulla and the functioning of the adrenal medulla is intimately linked with the sympathetic nerve action. Fear, pain, exposure to cold, low blood pressure, and emotional upsets stimulate the release of epinephrine (also called adrenaline) and norepinephrine. These hormones are poured into the blood stream during fear or anger and they are responsible for many of the changes which accompany these emotions. Through repeated excitement, anger, fear etc., the adrenal glands may be exhausted of their reserve supply of adrenaline. Adrenal deficiency is characterized by indecision, a tendency to worry and an inclination to weep for the slightest provocation.

7. The Gonads (Sex Glands)

The main gonads of the female are ovaries and in the male they are the testes (See fig. IV). These organs function as potent endocrine glands secreting hormones which makes a man a male and a woman feminine. These hormones have profound influence not only on the sexual activities but also a number of body-organs and functions of an individual.

Estrogen and progesterone are the two major sex hormones which are in a large measure responsible for the characteristics that distinguish a woman from a man. The male sex-hormones are androgen and testosterone. In both sexes, pituitary hormones play a profound role in controlling the functions of the sex-glands.

Emotional Function of Endocrines

Having dealt with physical function of the endocrine system, we shall now, briefly, discuss its action on the mental states and behavioural patterns of man

The nervous system and the endocrine system are the two major control-systems of the body. The coordinating effects of the nervous system are transmitted, nearly instantaneously by electro-chemical impulses, the endocrine glands secrete chemical regulators (hormones) which are carried through the body by the blood-stream. The action of the latter is more slowly established but longer lasting than that of the former. While nerve action is measured in milli-seconds, some hormones need several days to get started and then last for weeks, months or even years. Nerve-impulses control the function only of muscles and glands while hormones may act on all the cells of the body.

A serious study of the endocrines and their hormones commenced about the beginning of the century. It has now been known that besides the old method of chemical intercommunication between the two systems another method by nerve-action also exists. Lately, it has been realised that nervous and endocrine systems, both functioning to integrate the organism, are not as divergent as was formerly supposed. Many endocrine glands act on the nervous system through their hormones, on the other hand, endocrines are stimulated or inhibited by products of the nervous system.

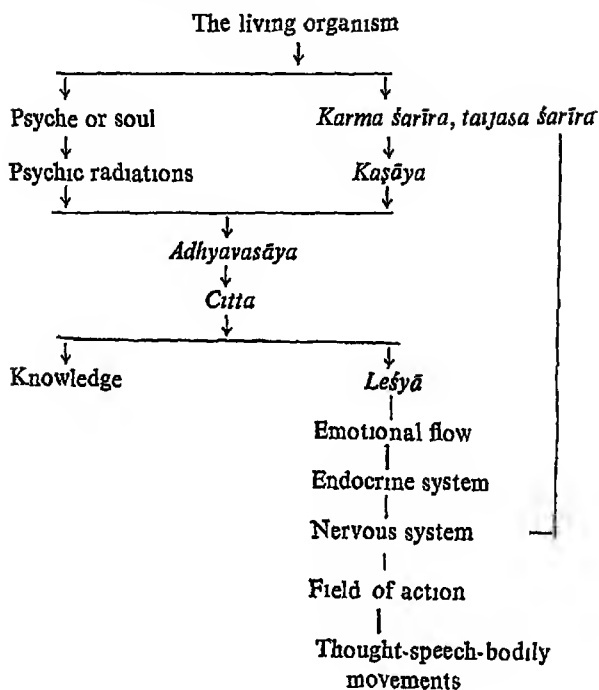
Within the central nervous system, there are groups of nerve-cells, which are capable of functioning as glands. The chemical messengers released by these neuro-secretory cells are called neuro-hormones. These cells serve as link between the central nervous system and the endocrine system. With the help of these dual cells acting as go-between, the central nervous system can control the functional activity of many endocrine glands, and adjust their activity in accordance with the requirements of varying

internal and external environments. Equally or more important is the reverse relationship by which the endocrine system can influence the central nervous system. This concept of the reciprocal inter-relation of the two systems is now generally accepted.

Recent studies on neuro-secretions leave no doubt that the nervous system has its own endocrine specialization for the release of hormones. The functional interlocking is so remarkable that nervous and endocrine elements are coming to be regarded as constituting a single integrated system called neuro-endocrine system. As research deepens our knowledge of coordinatory systems, it becomes increasingly apparent that their products participate not only in every bodily function, but have profound influence upon the mental states and behaviour of individuals.

The neuro-endocrine system is the seat of feelings, emotions and passions of man. Impulses and urges which are the forerunners of emotions and passions, not only generate feelings but also command appropriate action that satisfy the need. Animals just act out instinctive rituals of eating, courtship and fighting because they do not possess a reasoning mind. Man, on the other hand, because he has conscious reasoning, can control his response to the insistence of the impulsive drives. Of course, man also does feel angry, hungry and sexually aroused, but he can modify his action. He could, for example, channel an erotic mood on to another creative track.

Love, hate and fear are endocrine expressions. It is the primitive urge of aggression from the endocrine, that will start war and not the brain, because no reasoning mind will ever wish to kill or injure. All the passions, emotions and impelling forces are the actions of the endocrine expressions. The reasoning mind itself has no emotions but many a time the powerful impulses from the endocrine can overwhelm and continue to tinge the supposed reasoning



2

Psychic Centres : Philosophical Version

Duality of our Existence

Philosophy teaches us that we exist in duality i.e. we are made up of two elements. One is our consciousness i.e. soul or spirit and the other is our material body. This duality of existence continues until the conscious element achieves emancipation i.e. until we realise purest state of consciousness. In the mundane dual existence, the conscious element (spirit) must have a physical or material body to function (and perform in).

In fact, there is not only one—the gross physical body, but there are a couple of subtle bodies also. The composition of our personality is extremely complex. We can try to understand this diagrammatically thus—the nucleus of our personality is the conscious element, i.e. the conscious stuff or the soul. Completely surrounding the nucleus is the more subtle body called *karmic* body. This produces the envelope of passions and emotions. Radiations from the nucleus have to emerge out through this envelope to manifest the conscious activity. This manifestation of the activity is called the conscious field—*adhyavasāya*. The *karmic* body is itself enveloped by another less subtle one called *taijas* body. The conscious activity ultimately manifests itself in the gross physical body via the *taijas* body, i.e. the bio-electrical body which energizes the brain and the nerves.

Thus our life processes lie almost wholly within ourselves and are amenable to be controlled by our spiritual self. Our primal drives, animal impulses and carnal desires

can be controlled and subdued by developing our reasoning mind and wisdom. It is the spiritual self which gives the strength of subjugating the passions by developing wisdom.

Endocrine System

Now, as soon as we accept the duality of our existence, we realise that there must be some means of communication between the subtle spiritual self and the gross physical body, that is, there must be some built-in mechanism within the body through which the former can exercise its power and authority and control the grosser elements of blood, bones and bodily organs. This mechanism must translate the code of intangible and imperceptible spiritual forces into a form of crude power which is material enough to work through flesh, nerves and other material chemical constituents of our body. These inter-communicating transformers between the most subtle spiritual and the gross physical selves are our endocrine or ductless glands which produce and distribute (through blood-circulation) chemical substance called hormones.

Endocrine and Psychic Centres

Philosophers, scientists and doctors unanimously agree that these endocrines profoundly influence emotions and mental attitudes of a person.

Dr M. W. Kapp, M.D. writes in his book—*Glands—Our Invisible Guardians*—"Our jealousies, hates, fears, struggles for wealth, power, position, our lusts, and superstitions—all call upon the reserve supply of adrenal secretions—the fighting or energising secretion—until the glands are exhausted."

Other glands also become distorted by overwork.

All passions and emotions are expressions of the endocrine glands. Their arousal due to recorded past will overload the system, and their work is disintegrated. Excess secretion produces psychological distortions and weakens the glands. It is, therefore, necessary that we control and regulate the passions and emotions. The emotional

impulses must be resolved by conscious reasoning to avoid the overloading and disfunctioning of the system.

Psychic Centres in Acupunntare and Ayurveda

"*Sarveṇāṁ sarve*" is an aphorism in *Bhagavatī Sūtra*. It means that all the innumerable points of our conscious element are psychic centres. However, in certain parts of the body, there is greater concentration of the conscious element than in the other parts. This can be expressed in other words thus. The whole body comprises of an electro-magnetic field, but the intensity of the electro-magnetism in some specific parts is many times more than that in other parts. Our brain, sense-organs and the endocrines are such specific centres. Ayurveda calls these centres "vital centres" (*marma-sthāna*) and they have identified 107 vital centres. These are, therefore, the important centres where the conscious field is more intense. There is remarkable coincidence in the location and significance of the psychic centres identified in the Preksha meditation system and the vital centres identified by the Ayurveda system.

Techniques of acupressure and acupuncture have identified more than 700 centres in our body. These centres are pressed suitably or are stimulated by silver needles to relieve pain and cure many diseases. This system claims to cure some difficult cases. It is believed that all the vital organs including the brain are reflected in the sole of our feet and palms of our hands. Thus, the vital centres, acupressure points and the endocrines are associated with our psychic centres and profoundly influenced by them.

Psychic centres vitalise all important organs including the sense organs and the mind. An important purpose of meditational practice is to establish a more balanced equilibrium in the functioning of these organs. Preception of psychic centres can do this efficiently.

Centre of Wisdom and Centre of Sex

The physical body can be divided into two divergent fields and psychic activities. The portion above the navel,

upto the top of the head is the field of wisdom and that below the navel is the field of passions and sex. The conscious action is concentrated sometimes in one field and sometimes in other. The flow of vital energy generally follows the conscious action. The field of passion is the main source of creative energy or libido and the conscious action of man is normally more concentrated in this field than in the field of wisdom. This is because libido is a primal drive and the average man to-day is constantly subjected to tremendous sexual excitement. Thus most of the time the conscious action is concentrated in the nether field. According to the psychologists, sexual urge is the most powerful and the most persistent of all instincts in man. The stress of other instincts is much less frequent—at times fear, sometimes anger, occasionally jealousy and haughtiness and so on, but he is never entirely free from the stress of sexual excitement and the resultant tensions are very deeprooted.

Besides pleasure, the field of passion is also the centre for misery and cruelty. One suffers misery due to loss of some beloved possession or due to undesirable association. Pleasant and unpleasant sensations are produced in this centre.

Suffering from pain, efforts to remove pain, cruelty, jealousy, hatred are all expressions of this centre.

Intrinsic Level of Consciousness

Mind is not the intrinsic level of consciousness. Our instincts and impulses such as, anger, conceit, jealousy and greed constitute the intrinsic level of consciousness. Ill health emanates from there. Our character also emanates from there, it does not emanate from the brain. Character depends upon emotions and the latter emanate from the endocrines which are not located in the brain. So far, brain was believed to be the seat of emotions and was the most important organ. Similarly, heart and kidneys were also believed to be vitally important organs. But recent

advancement and research has proved that the most important organs of our body are ductless glands—endocrines. Endocrine secretion does not flow out from a duct. It is distributed and reaches the target through the blood stream. Impulses, urges and evil behaviour are all expressions of the endocrines. The vitiated and distorted tendencies of man cannot be purified unless one modifies and transmutes the endocrine production. Goodness of character and honesty cannot be achieved and psychological distortions cannot be eradicated without influencing the endocrine system. The tool for achieving inner harmony is transmutation of hormone-secretion and not preaching. This fact has been proved by experience¹ and applies to 95% of people. Only a very few who have developed a higher level of consciousness could be exception to the rule that to establish and enhance moral value, transmutation of the endocrine output is essential.

Interaction of Feeling and Behaviour

Instincts not only generate feelings but also command appropriate action to satisfy the need. This is true for all animals including men. The most basic feelings—primal drives are the unlearned instincts such as hunger, sex, anger, fear and aggression. Animals just act out of instinctive rituals of eating, courtship and fighting. As for man,

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- 1 In almost all religious and prayer traditions the posture of worship is to kneel with folded hands, bow and touch the ground with one's forehead. Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, etc. all adopt this practice while praying or worshipping. This process of bowing from the waist while kneeling with folded hands and bringing the head down has profound influence on the secretion and haughtiness-producing hormones by the adrenal glands and this results in the emotion of humbleness. This is one of the most primitive and universal religious traditions and provides an excellent example of transmutation of endocrine secretion by the joint action of posture, feeling and contemplative meditation.

hundreds of other emotional responses based on powerful feelings, not necessarily instinctual but learned, interact with primal drives, either reinforcing or countermanding it. He can control his responses to the insistence of the instinctive drive, because he has the reasoning mind. He can modify his behaviour, he may, for example, channel an erotic mood on to another creative action. This capacity of modification of behaviour distinguishes man from beast, which is incapable of controlling its responses to the command of instinctive drives. Because it does not possess a reasoning mind, a beast will always remain a beast and its behaviour will be bestial. Man, on the other hand, is capable of countermanding his bestial feelings and subjugate his carnal desires.

Uniqueness of Man

In many respects, no doubt, man is also an animal like any other. He does feel angry, hungry, beset with fear and sexually aroused, because he, like others, also possesses the primal drives—the unlearned instincts—of aggression, hunger and sex. To eat, to work, to fight and to reproduce are common to man and other animals. He is bound by his needs. Hate, love, desires and lusts dominate his actions. But there is a level of consciousness within man that is higher than that in other animals, and possession of some basic human characteristics makes him a very peculiar, and, in many ways, a unique animal. According to the theory of evolution, man represents the culmination of the process of evolution. Human mind and personality are unique and constitute the highest product yet achieved by the cosmos. This is because man alone, by means of his inherent conscious reason, along with its chief offspring, science, has the power of setting higher standards and values for his progress. Lower organisms do not possess a reasoning mind, mere survival—capacity for adaptation to only immediate circumstances—is inherent in them.

They (the animals and plants) go on, generation after generation, living as their progenitors have done. The

unique characteristics of man are biological as well psychological. A review of the former ones, though can make interesting reading, is rather irrelevant for our discussion.

The characteristic which concerns us the most is Man's capacity for rational, conceptual and conscious judgement. Man has two minds : the conscious (or reasoning mind) and the sub-conscious mind. This subconscious consciousness is the impelling force in man and is expressed in the endocrine system. Our emotions are the actions of the endocrines. The reasoning mind itself has no emotions.

Scriptural Version

Modern scientific research has greatly deepened our knowledge of neuro-endocrine system. One remains a dwarf while another becomes abnormally tall, one is ugly, while another is beautiful, one is healthy and robust, another is sick and a weakling, one is intelligent, another is ignorant. All these depend on the hormone and neuro-hormone secretions and their synthesization. They co-ordinate and regulate all important functions such as birth, growth, development of brain-cells and metabolism. Let us review these discoveries of science in the light of scriptural wisdom.

One of the eight branches of *karma* is called *nāma karma*. It governs many important functions of the gross body by its various sub-branches. One is dwarf or tall according to the dictates of *samsthāna nāma karma*. Similarly, beauty and ugliness, popularity and unpopularity and many other qualities are governed by various departments of this *karma*. It is clear that this *karma* is mainly responsible for the different parameters of the physical body.

It is obvious from the above that the ancient philosophy and the modern science reveal the same factual knowledge, though in different terminology. Science describes the process by the words like "hormones", "chemical messengers", "feedback system", etc. Scriptures

disseminate the same knowledge by such technical term as fruition and subsidence of "*karma*", "bondage", etc.

Yoga and Physiology

Yoga emphasizes the location of various *chakras* and *kamalas* (lotus) in the body physiology tells us about endocrine glands. Surgeons may declare that we have dissected the whole body into minute bits, but we have not seen any *chakra* or *lotus* anywhere within the body. Conventional surgical operations can never discover the existence of *chakra* etc Let us ignore the existence of navel-lotus, let us not argue whether *ājñā-chakra* exists or not, but we cannot negate the existence of pineal, pituitary, thyroid etc If we are prepared to ignore the myths, legends and superstitions and if only we can adopt a comparative attitude, it can be seen that there is no real or significant divergence between *yoga* and physiology. In the past, we have been taught almost exclusively by exhortations; we can now be taught by facts proved by science.

We can safely assume that philosophy and science can together pave the way for higher wisdom for the benefit of the mankind All that is necessary is that the ancient terminology and their interpretations be expanded, modified and restated in terms that encompass newly discovered aspects by science.

In the following chapters we shall discuss the function of psychic centres, the benefits which can be derived by the perception of these centres and the technique for such an exercise

3

Raison D'être

Though every man does possess a reasoning mind (and conscious reasoning, it is not capable of just and fair reasoning, until properly developed. Till then, man's response to the insistence of his impulses is based on his intelligence and *a priori* logic. His judgement is then devoid of conscious reasoning. In fact, the logic is often so tinged by the intense impulses that they overwhelm the supposed reasoning. At such times, reasoning seeks proofs to justify the action demanded by the instincts. Thus, it is essential to develop and evolve the reasoning mind in order to master the impelling forces of the primal urges.

Development of Reasoning Mind (*Viveka-chetanā*)

Systematic development of conscious reasoning and rational judgement alone can control and destroy the dominance of animal impulses, savage traditions, superstitions and numerous traditional and conventional beliefs. Dangerous impulsive forces would then either be creatively utilised or eliminated. What is necessary, then, is the development of that unique attribute of mankind which is called reasoning mind and rational thinking, and ultimately establish control of conscious reasoning over all the activities—physical, mental and emotional.

Harmony of the Endocrine System

The endocrines are the tuning keys that tighten up or soften down the driving forces of the organism. They are, therefore, the psychic centres. They form a system¹ and cannot perform or function separately. Each influences the rest in the chain. The system is inter-related by chemical

1. Often called Endocrine Orchestra.

/processes and inter-locked with the brain and the nervous system. Our thoughts affect the endocrines as the latter also influence our brain and mind. Imbalance or discordance in the endocrine system will vitiate the thought and produce psychological distortions, e.g. over-activity of the gonads will cause the mind to dwell on matters sexual, cause peevishness or irrational fear.

Practice of the perception of psychic centres has the capacity to restore harmony and equilibrium in the endocrine system to strengthen the power of reasoning mind and weaken the forces of primal urges.

Incompleteness of the Surgical Remedy

Meditation is a process of integrated development of personality. It changes habits, refines attitude and behaviour and transforms the entire personality of the practitioner. The result of meditational practice can be observed, defined and interpreted scientifically. Modern science has proved that life's processes lie almost wholly within oneself and are amenable to transformation. It has been established by the use of the feedback equipments that meditation changes the electrical activity as well as transmutes the synthesisization of hormones.

RNA (Ribonucleic acid) is a product of the internal cellular activities. It is believed that this chemical substance plays an important role in the personality of an individual. It follows that transformation of this factor can help in changing one's personality. Old habits can be changed to new ones.

Our organisation has three areas of successive stages of conscious activities. The first is the centre where most subtle conscious radiations are generated as waves (of urges and impulses). The second is the medium through which it is transformed into feelings and the third is the area where it manifests itself as a physical and mental activity. All these take place in the organism through the internal organisation. For instance, take anger. It starts, as an impulsive reaction to some aggressive situation, in the

form of a wave-radiation from the innermost recesses of consciousness—stage no 1. It reaches and reacts with endocrine brain and nerves—stage no 2 and finally manifests itself in various parts of the body—stage no. 3.

Modern science would describe the same sequence thus .

Anger starts as an impulsive reaction to some aggressive situation in the form of a wave-radiation from the consciousness. It reaches the brain and activates the pituitary through hypothalamus. Pituitary-hormone (ACTH) reaches and reacts with the adrenal gland and stimulates it to release adrenaline in the blood stream which reaches the motor area in the brain via the neuro-transmitters. Finally it manifests itself by producing certain physiological conditions making the body ready for aggression. Thus science is aware of the centre of generation of impulses and the paths of their transmission to the brain. If the transmission line is surgically destroyed, the instinct cannot generate feeling and is incapable of commanding action. By stimulating or inhibiting certain portions of the brain, particularly hypothalamus, anger, fear, sexual excitement and other urges can be neutralized. The field that manifests them remains passive because the transmission is cut off. It must, however, be remembered that in such operation, only the transmission of the impulsive agitation is cut off but the generation is not stopped and continues. The manifestation in the final field does not occur but the primary centre of agitation remains active. This means that by blocking the transmission, a temporary transformation of the behaviour is achieved, but the origin of the agitation remains as active as before. In other words, a mask is used to hide the hediousness of the face while the face continues to remain as hedious as before. The change is external and superfluous, not internal and intrinsic.

Thus, the surgical treatment of controlling the impulsive forces can be looked upon as an expedient and not a perma-

nent solution of the problem. The permanent remedy is to achieve a state of blissful tranquillity in which the impelling force of the urge fails to generate the wave. Frequent repetitions strengthen the agitational force of impulsive drive such as anger, fear etc. Anger, for example, grows if it is fed with anger. If no nourishment is fed to anger, it will wither and die down. Psychic science (*adhyātma*) is based on the doctrine of equanimity and its technique is self-awareness. Self-awareness is the foundation of tranquil (waveless) consciousness. When one reaches this state, there is neither like nor dislike, neither attachment nor aversion. In this state of consciousness, the wave of anger is not suppressed, but the force which generates the wave of anger is eradicated. Whereas the surgical implements or medicinal remedies strike at the brain, spinal cord or nerves i.e. the instruments of transmission, the self-awareness and tranquillity released by meditation strikes not only on the transmission system but the prime mover that drives the generator of impulses. It is a process of extermination from the roots and that is why the solution is permanent and everlasting. The technique of realising the tranquil (waveless) state is the perception of psychic centres. Thus the perception of psychic centres is not merely an important means of self-realisation, but it is the only means.

Contact with Subconscious Mind

Endocrine glands in our body are components of the sub-conscious self. Because they affect the brain, they are more powerful and important than the brain. If they are properly harmonised by systematic efficient meditation, one becomes free from fear, and freedom from fear means freedom from all hurdles. Endocrinology—science of endocrines—does not specify the proper method of harmonising the system. Only the psychic science can show the way in this regard. And the method shown by it is regular practice of meditation. Meditation (concentrated perception) of psychic centres (fields of neuronal endocrine action) removes distortion and discordance from the system. The more profound the concentration, the more harmonised

will the system become. And this will result in freedom from fear, cruelty and other psychological distortions. A new personality will be evolved with regenerated, revitalised and rejuvenated conscious mind. The psychic centre of intuition (associated with pituitary) is the centre of intuitive insight. It is also the centre of internal vision and right vision. When one concentrates on this psychic centre and perceives it, one is able to reach and communicate with the deeper levels of consciousness.

The capacity of our conscious mind¹ is limited in the field of personality development. While it is adequately capable (if developed by proper education) of coping up with arguments, hypothesis, critical evaluation and creative imagination in the fields of science, art and literature etc., it is not always capable of controlling behavioural patterns of the individual. Indeed, by far the greater part of one's behaviour is not controlled by conscious decisions. It follows, therefore, that this faculty cannot bring about changes in the attitude and behaviour of a person, let alone realising a tranquil (waveless—bereft of agitation and excitation) state. However, when one practises perception of the psychic centre of intuition, one's will and determination can transcend the conscious mind and reach the deeper levels of sub-conscious mind. It can even penetrate further and reach the fields of *leśyā* and *adhyavasāya*, i.e. the most subtle inner conscious levels.² Then the blissful tranquil state is realised, and attitude and behaviour drastically changed.

Tour of the Psychic Centres by Conscious Mind

Mind is ever wandering. It takes a tour of the body from head to foot. Sometimes it wanders about in the upper region and sometimes in the nether region. Sometimes it

1. What we mean by the term 'Conscious Mind' is the faculty which processes the raw sensations into perception, which initiates and controls muscular activity, which thinks and imagines, which is endowed with a memory store, and which is the substratum of all intellectual performance. In short, it is the faculty which transmutes the complex neuronal activity in the cerebral cortex, into conscious experience.

- 2 See table on p. 17

dips into the memory store and is suddenly filled with violence or hatred or intense dislike, on the other hand, sometimes it is filled with benevolent thoughts and at times it is mentally prepared to renounce the world. Why does this happen? Why do the sentiments 'change'? Who opens the door or window of the memory-store? It is none else but our own conscious mind. Wherever and wherever our attention is fixed on whichever organ or gland or psychic centre or a particular part of the body, the attention is concentrated or focussed on that part and the organ or centre is stimulated. Once, this simple rule is known, it becomes easy for a *sādhaka* to choose the centre of concentration. For integrated development of personality, it is necessary to meditate on those centres which are responsible for and control of our attitude, behaviour and personality factors. These are (i) centre of purity (*viśuddhi kendra*), (ii) centre of intuition (*dāśana kendra*), (iii) centre of enlightenment (*jyoti kendra*), (iv) centre of peace (*śānti kendra*), and (v) centre of wisdom (*jñāna kendra*). These five psychic centres regulate and control our personality factors and, therefore, our behaviour. Perception of these centres purges out distortions from our thoughts and deeds, changes negative attitudes to positive ones and aesthetises our character and behaviour.

It is true that environmental conditions do influence our emotional nature. But environment is not the material cause or primary reason. The main cause is the synthesis of hormonal secretions by our endocrines. This, then, is the material cause, while the environmental conditions are the immediate cause. We have to modify the material cause as well as the immediate one. However, primary importance must be given to the former, while the environmental circumstances can be given the second place. The impelling forces of the emotional drives are derived from the translation of the impulsive past recorded in the inner subtle body (*karma śarīra*). The endocrine system is the inter-communicating computer or transformer between the subtle and the gross bodies. Hormones produced by the endocrines act as chemical messengers and integrate the organism. Once the wise *sādhaka* learns this truth and its implications, he will not be bogged down in the superfluous

outer bodily functions, but delve deeper inside. Ultimately, he will come face to face with the inner subtle body and the intangible code of the recorded past. This, in reality, is the main purpose of the spiritual exercises—to delve deeper and deeper, till one reaches the subtle body, decode and interpret the imperceptible forces of *karma*, which is the prime mover of the endocrine activity. Nay, he should go still further and realise his own real self, the psyche or the soul, who is the real master, animating the subtle as well as the gross bodies.

The psychic action is ceaseless i.e. the flow of spiritual energy is constant. When the flow is directed towards upper psychic centres, the result is goodness or godliness, but when the flow is directed towards the nether centres which are the generators of passions and urges, the result is evil and distorted thought and deed. When the flow of psychic energy activates nether centres i.e. adrenals and gonads which, by synthesization of their products, incite the passionate urges like anger and aggression, and which provide the impelling force to the primal drives,¹ the result will be irrational behaviour and impulsive action.

It follows from the above that once the rules and regulations² governing the flow of psychic energy are learnt i.e. which flow produces evil and which produces good, we can remain in complete command of our urges and impulses, eradicate evil from our behaviour and achieve total goodness.

Thus we realise the truth that there are several psychic centres in different parts of the body. Focussing our psychic attention on these centres—concentrated perception of these centres—would open doors and windows through which the higher levels of our consciousness would give us a sense of wisdom and subdue our animal impulses.

1 The primal drives are hunger, fear, sex and possessiveness

2 According to an archaic manuscript, when the psychic attention is focussed on a certain petal of navel-lotus, it stimulates anger; another petal incites haughtiness; a third one incites deceit; a fourth one arouses intense sexual desire, and so on. On the other hand, when it is focussed on the petals of the heart-lotus, the result is tranquillity and development of wisdom. When focussed on the top of the head, the capacity of extra-sensory perception and even-omniscience is developed.

IV

Perception of Psychic Centres : Technique

Chakras, Kyushos, Glands

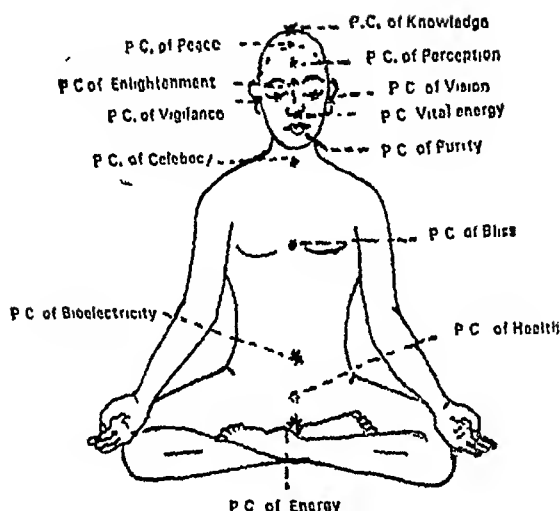
There are many psychic centres in our body. In the ancient system of Yoga, they are called *chakras*. In the Buddhist 'Judo' system prevalent in Japan, they are called *kyushos*. The modern science calls them endocrine glands. It is astonishing that the location of these centres and their physical properties are very similar with minor differences in all these disciplines. The following table gives the names of these centres in all the three systems :

| | <i>Chakras (Yoga)</i> | <i>Kyushos (Judo)</i> | <i>Glands</i> |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. | <i>Sahasrāra</i> | Tendo | Pineal |
| 2. | <i>Ājñā</i> | Uto | Pituitary |
| 3. | <i>Viśuddhi</i> | Hichu | Thyroid |
| 4. | <i>Anāhat</i> | Kyotosty | Thymus |
| 5. | <i>Manipūra</i> | Suigestu | Adrenal |
| 6. | <i>Svādhisṭhāna</i> | Myojo | Gonads |
| 7. | <i>Mūlādhāra</i> | Tsurigane | Gonads |

Psychic Centres (*Chaitanya kendras*)

In the *PREKSHA* system, psychic centres (*chaitanya kendras*) correspond to the *chakras* and *glands*. The following table shows the psychic centres, their location in the body and their association with the endocrine glands or sense-organs :

| | Psychic Centres | Endocrine Glands | Location |
|-----|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Centre of Energy | Gonads | Bottom end of the spinal cord. |
| 2. | „ „ Health | Gonads | Lower abdomen |
| 3. | „ „ Bio-electricity | Adrenal, pancreas Islets of Langerhans | Navel |
| 4 | „ „ Bliss | Thymus | Near the heart |
| 5. | „ „ Purity | Thyroid, parathyroid | Adam's apple—throat |
| 6 | „ „ Celibacy | Sense-organ of Taste | Tongue (Tip) |
| 7. | „ „ Vital Energy | Sense-organ of Smell | Nose (Tip) |
| 8 | „ „ Vision | Sense-organ of Sight | Eyes |
| 9. | „ „ Vigilance | Sense-organ of Hearing | Ears |
| 10 | „ „ Intuition | Pituitary | Middle of the eyebrows |
| 11 | „ „ Enlightenment | Pineal | Centre of the forehead |
| 12 | „ „ Peace | Hypothalamus | Front part of the head |
| 13. | „ „ Wisdom | Cerebral Cortex | Top of the head |



Process of Perception

The technique of perception of a particular psychic centre is simply this : Focus your full attention on that centre. Greater the concentration, more active the centre would become. The choice of the centre will depend upon the purpose of meditation. For instance, choose centre of purity (no. 5 in the table) and focus your attention on it, if you wish to subjugate your carnal desires. This would enfeeble the desires and render them more amenable to the control of conscious mind. If you wish to acquire extra sensory perception (E.S.P.), then choose centre of intuition (no. 10 in the table) and focus your full attention on it. This will enable you to acquire power of precognition and such other para-psychological capabilities. If you want to develop wisdom in general, meditate on the top of the head and activate the centre of wisdom (no 13 in the table). The underlying principle is quite simple. Meditate on that centre which is to be activated. When you focus your attention on any centre, the flow of vital energy gets directed towards that centre and it is subjected to richer vascular supply. Conversely, a neglected centre could be

starved of vital energy and could become inactive.

Process of Purification

The psychic centres enumerated in the preceding table are the major centres. There are many more ones in the whole body, each producing an electro magnetic field around it. All these have to be purified or decontaminated. When pure, they radiate extra-sensory conscious activity. As long as they remain contaminated, they block the psychic radiations. This prevents us from actually "seeing" the subtle processes such as interaction of molecules, atoms and other particles of matter with one another.¹

Actual perception of subtle sensation is possible only when the psychic centres are decontaminated by meditation.

Centres of Reason Vs. Centres of Passions

All psychic centres can be broadly divided into two groups. (i) Centres of reason or wisdom, and (ii) Centres of desires or passions. The first group is situated in the head and the upper part (heart and above), while the second group is situated in the nether part of the body. Whenever our conscious mind, accompanied by the flow of vital energy, is directed to the nether area, the centres of

1. The human body is equipped with a versatile assortment of sensory outposts making up considerably more than the traditional 'five senses'. The sense-organs and other sensory outposts send millions of separate sensation-signals—coded messages—to the brain every second. These raw sensations—the unprocessed input of awareness—must be processed by various parts of the brain before becoming perception. By a remarkable process of "automatization" a vast majority of these sensations are automatically filtered out and prevented from reaching the higher brain i.e. from becoming perception or awareness. Much more can actually be 'seen' and 'heard' if by a reverse process of deautomatization, some of the rejected sensations can be made to reach the higher brain. Meditational practice is such a process of deautomatization. Ancient seers and sages acquired sagacity and wisdom by regular practice of profound meditation. They could 'see' the atoms of the elements and those of their own bodies, their mutual interaction and the interaction between the matter and the conscious element. They could get a real consistent view of the world in which everything was connected with everything else.

passions are aroused, excited and activated, and the desires overwhelm the reason. On the other hand, whenever our conscious mind is concentrated in the upper region of the body, the flow of vital energy, which follows it, strengthens and reinforces the conscious reasoning, thus enabling it to subjugate the carnal desires or passions.

THE TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

Posture — For a successful practice of meditation, steadiness of the body is essential. Posture, therefore, is an important feature of the exercise. The practitioner must remain motionless, quiet and alert for the duration of the exercise. Obviously, therefore, a posture which produces any kind of distracting discomfort is ruled out. Strain or discomfort must be avoided during the session. An advanced practitioner may adopt a standing posture. In exceptional condition a recumbent posture may also be used. But a sitting posture is most convenient for learners and novices, and is most commonly adopted. Any of the following postures may be chosen —

Full lotus posture (Padmāsana)

Half lotus posture (Aradha-padmāsana)

Simple posture (Sukhāsana)

Diamond posture (Vajrāsana)

Although the full lotus posture is the best, the practitioner may adopt any one of these which can be comfortably maintained for the duration of the session. Some discomfort is inevitable, in the beginning, in any cross-legged posture, but a little practice would eliminate it to the extent that it ceases to be a distraction. However, if at any time during the practice, there is a feeling of distracting discomfort, the position of the legs may be quietly changed without opening the eyes. In all postures, the trunk and head are erect with the spine and neck in a straight line. There should, however, be no stiffness. Eyes remain softly closed.

Mudrā .—The position of practitioner's hands is called *mudrā*. One of the following two *mudrās* may be assumed.

(a) Let the back of your right palm rest on your right knee and the left hand on the left knee, both palms turned up. Let the index fingers touch the roots of thumbs, with a slight pressure in the contact. The other fingers are kept straight.

or (b) Bend both arms at the elbows. Keep the back of your left hand on the central part of your lap and the back of your right hand on the top of the upturned palm of your left hand.

Do not put your hands on the ground.

Do not keep your palm turned downwards.

In a standing posture, stand erect with the spine and neck in a straight line but without stiffness.

Keep your feet parallel to each other with a distance of about 10 cms. between them.

Let your arms hang down loosely, from the shoulder joints close to your body, with the palms open, facing inwards and fingers straight and pointing down. Keep all skeletal muscles relaxed.

If a practitioner is unable to adopt either standing or a sitting-on-the-floor posture, he may sit in a chair. An armless chair is to be used. Keep your back and neck in a straight line without the back rest. There should be no stiffness.

Keep your feet parallel as in the standing.

Premeditation Exercise No. 1 · Relaxation (*Kāyotsarga*)

This is an essential precondition of meditational practice, resulting in steadiness of the body. The whole body is mentally divided into several convenient parts and full attention is concentrated on each part. By the process of auto-suggestion, each part is relaxed and the relaxation experienced. The relaxed and motionless state of the body is maintained throughout the meditation session. Simultaneously, there should be a keen awareness of the spiritual self.

Premeditation Exercise No 2 : Internal Trip (*Antaryātra*)

Full attention is to be concentrated on the bottom of the spine called Śakti kendra. It is then directed to travel upwards along the spinal cord to the top of the head, Jñāna kendra. When the top is reached, direct the attention to move downwards taking the same path until it reaches śakti kendra again. Repeat the exercise for about 5 to 7 minutes. All the time, the consciousness is confined in the path of the trip (i.e. the spinal cord), and the sensations therein, caused by the subtle vibrations of the flow of the vital energy, are carefully perceived.

Perception of Psychic Centres

Maintaining the relaxed condition of the body and the motionless posture, commence the perception of psychic centres. Focus your attention on Śakti kendra—centre of energy—and be aware of the vibrations produced by the flow of vital energy in this psychic centre, for 2 to 3 minutes. Repeat the exercise by focussing the attention respectively on —

| | | |
|----------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Svāsthya | kendra | (Centre of general health) |
| Taijasa | „ | (Centre of bio-electricity) |
| Ānanda | „ | („ „ bliss) |
| Viśuddhi | „ | („ „ purity) |
| Brahma | „ | („ „ celibacy) |
| Prāṇa | „ | („ „ vital energy) |
| Chākṣuṣa | „ | („ „ vision) |
| Apramāda | „ | („ „ vigilance) |
| Darśana | „ | („ „ intuition) |
| Jyoti | „ | („ „ enlightenment) |
| Śānti | „ | („ „ peace) |
| Jñāna | „ | („ „ wisdom) |

and be aware of the vibrations produced by the flow of the vital energy in each centre for 2 to 3 minutes. It should be remembered that after meditating on the nether centres (No 1, 2 and 3) it is essential to meditate on the upper centres. The order of meditation is normally upwards, and not downwards. If there is not enough time to cover all the centres, the nether ones may be left out.

5

Perception of Psychic Centres : Benefits

Centre of Wisdom (*Jñāna Kendra*)

Brain, in general, and cerebral cortex, in particular, is the psychic centre of knowledge. This is also the centre of wisdom and one of the most important centres of consciousness. All mental states manifest themselves by the complex neuronal activity in various areas of the cortex. Brain (with the help of nervous system) is the medium of translating the coded imperceptible activity of the inner subtle body into a crude power which activates the conscious mind and the gross body. Intelligence, memory-store, capacity of purposeful planning—all these are found here. Sensations—coded messages—sent by the sense-organs and other sensory outposts are processed and interpreted here to become perceptions. It is the apex of the central nervous system. Cerebrum, cerebellum and brain-stem are all associated with the centre of wisdom and hence concentrated perception of this centre will improve and refine all the mental functions stated above.

Perceptual meditation (*prekṣā*) first awakens and then develops this centre. Its development improves intelligence, strengthens memory and reinforces perceptual activity. Perceptual meditation of the entire cortical area may result in higher levels of consciousness. This is an important aspect of the manifold para-psychological possibilities. In general a psychic centre, which is developed by the technique of "perception of psychic centres" (laid down in the previous chapter) develops para-psychological ability. In particular, the perception of cerebrum

and ce 2 bellum can develop one's extrasensory perceptive (E.S.P.) abilities. Memory of previous life (or lives), precognition, clairvoyance etc are some of the E.S.P. possibilities which can be achieved by regular systematic perception of these centres.

Centre of Peace (*Śānti Kendra*)

This centre is situated in the frontal lobe of the brain, and is an important source of nervous energy. It is closely associated with hypothalamus, limbic system and emotion. Whatever flows out from the subtle inner body in the form of emotional stream engages the conscious mind in this part of the brain. Then they become our mental states. Thus, this centre is the junction of the subtle and the gross bodies.

The preceptors of *Āyurveda* have called this centre *Adhipati Marma*, that is 'commanding vital centre'. Modern science calls it 'hypothalamus'. It is the junction of the nervous and the endocrine systems, and, is therefore, the main centre of the integrated neuro-endocrine system.

According to *Haṭhayoga* system, this is the seat of *Sahasrāra Cakra* and *Brahma Randhra*. In the ancient literature, the term 'heart' is used to indicate and identify one's emotions and sentiments. This term does not refer to the heart which pumps the blood but the heart that is the core or centre of the brain and this is nothing else but hypothalamus or *Śānti kendra*. This part of the brain is the seat of emotions manifested in the mind.

It follows, therefore, that concentrated perception of this centre results in decontaminating the emotions and plays an important role in the development of the other centres. Thus for 'change of heart', meditation on and development of the centre of peace is inevitable.

Centres of Enlightenment and Intuition (*Jyoti Kendra*, *Darśana Kendra*)

Situated deep inside and in the centre of the head but at the centre of the forehead in the front view, is the

Centre of Enlightenment (*Jyoti Kendra*) Similarly, deep inside the head but between the eyebrows in the front view, is the Centre of Intuition (*Darśana Kendra*) These are the most important centres in the system, of *Preksā-dhyāna* Referring to the endocrine system, the former is associated with the pineal body and the latter with the pituitary gland. The excitation or inhibition of our passions—anger, naughtiness, deceit, and greed—and the psychological distortions—fear, hatred as well as sexual excitation—is controlled by the hypothalamus. Both these centres are very intimately connected in this process of regulation. Pineal and pituitary are directly and intimately interconnected with the hypothalamus

Jyoti Kendra is the most important centre for inhibiting urges of anger, sexual excitement etc Meditational perception of this centre is an efficient means of calming down raging anger Perception of bright white colour on this centre is an excellent tool for subduing all sorts of urges, impulses and excitements

We know that the pineal gland begins to slow down its functioning at the age of twelve/thirteen years i.e. just before adolescence starts. The withdrawal of this gland's control leaves the field free for sexual excitement Criminal tendencies also begin to raise their ugly heads If regular meditational practice is introduced at this age and continued through adolescence, it will keep the pineal-controls active and a well-balanced integrated personality can be developed

Darśana Kendra is also a very important psychic centre. It has immense possibilities Some systems regard this centre as the Centre of Omniscience. It is also known as *Ajñā Cakra* i.e. 'commanding centre', and also 'the third eye' Looking from the front, it is at the centre of the eye-brows but is actually situated deep inside at the centre of the skull The mystics of occidental origin have regarded this as the place of the third eye, and have dealt with this aspect at length in the vast literature on this

subject

If a person can meditate on this *kendra* continuously for three hours everyday, i.e. he is able to concentrate and focus his full attention on this *kendra*, then after ten days' practice, he will find that there is no need to go about seeking a path for realising higher level of consciousness. In this period of three hours there must not be any distraction. Normally it is difficult to concentrate even for a period of ten minutes, to remain undistracted for three long hours is indeed extremely difficult. The performer who is able to concentrate for ten/fifteen minutes, however, would undoubtedly realise that if he could prolong his concentration without distraction for three hours, he would positively realise the path he has been seeking and he need not seek it any more. Development of pre-cognition, intuition and other ESP capabilities could be realised.

Darśana Kendra is the field of pituitary activity. Pituitary is the so-called master gland which regulates the activities of the other glands. Rationality of our behaviour will depend mainly upon the activation of this gland. Failure of pituitary's control over adrenals and gonads would result in psychological distortions and irrational behaviour.

Darśana Kendra is closely associated with pituitary. *Jyoti Kendra* and *Darśana Kendra* are control-mechanisms for subjugating urges and impulses. Meditation on these psychic centres keeps the pineal and pituitary alert and vigilant, and establishes effective control over the functioning of adrenals and gonads. Sexual arousal, excitation and other urges are expressions of adrenals and gonads. As and when these glands are effectively controlled by the pineal and/or pituitary, conscious self-discipline takes command of the sexual and other urges. They are transmuted and a blissful state is realised. One who desires to practise celibacy as a way of life must necessarily establish the control of these two centres on the centre of sex, otherwise, the sexual urge will have to be repressed. The act of repression is itself unconscious and the repressed urge goes into the unconscious mind and is not eliminated.

And, so there will be a failure. Psychology also corroborates this doctrine. If anyone tries to practise celibacy without activating the vigilance of pituitary and pineal, it may result in deep depression and even lead to schizophrenia.

Centre of Purity (*Viśuddhi Kendra*)

Situated near the Adam's apple in the throat, this centre is the field of influence of the thyroid gland. According to Dr M W Kapp, M D, "The thyroid is very necessary for the development and evolvement of higher consciousness and psychic powers. Thyroxin, the active principle of the thyroid, is pure iodine. The thyroid secretions are the controllers of the speed of living. The more active the thyroid, the faster one must live, i.e. there is a greater intensity and capability of living, when the thyroid is active. The 'cretin' is a person with a great lack of thyroid secretion, and is slow of movement, clumsy and awkward and stumbles when going upstairs. The cretin seems to have no soul (by soul we mean mental and spiritual condition)" . . .¹.

Physiologically, too, thyroid is responsible for many important functions. Growth, metabolism, digestion, etc. are regulated by the hormones of the gland. By proper development and harmonization of this gland, all these functions would be properly regulated and carried out.

Meditation on this *kendra* will activate thyroid gland and enable one to control his urges and impulses. Not only will he be able to sublimate his passions, but to eradicate them completely from his behaviour. It is the dual action of the meditational practice viz to enfeeble the passions and at the same time evolve stronger spiritual forces which would ultimately subjugate the weakened forces of passions. Incidentally, perception of this centre is an excellent means of learning high degree of mental concentration.

Centre of Bliss (*Ānand Kendra*)

Located in the heart region in the middle of the lungs, this centre is the field of influence of the thymus gland. According to Dr Kapp, "It seems to be the dominating

1. Glands—Our Invisible Guardians, p 29.

gland of child growth before the time of puberty. It inhibits the activities of the testicles and ovaries. It seems to be the child-body builder supplying many of the elements that build the structure. It begins to regress at puberty".¹ Activation of the thymus gland by perception of this psychic centre enables one to get rid of one's carnal desires and withdraw from the sensual pleasures and begin to look inward. This centre also plays an important role in sublimating and subjugating one's *libido* i.e. the sexual desires are not so dominant and demanding. It is after the regression of the thymus gland that the sexual forces dominate one's pleasures. Perception of this psychic centre is an efficient means of transmuting and purifying one's erotic emotions.

Centre of Bio-electricity (*Tajasa Kendra*)

The navel region is the field of action of this psychic centre. It is associated with the adrenal glands which are situated over the kidneys. According to Dr Kapp, (while on the one hand) "adrenal secretion is the energising secretion supplying the base for saliva, pepsin, hydrochloric acid, liver, pancreatic and intestinal juices, on the other hand it raises our jealousies, hates, fears, our lusts and superstitions, etc."².

According to ancient Indian philosophy of Yoga, all primal instincts emanate from the actions of this centre. Their manifestation in our behaviour can be eliminated by transmutations of our emotional forces.

This centre is the seat of fire element and, therefore, generates heat and radiates it. Wherever there is heat, everything boils over. Meditation on this centre will excite and stimulate instincts and passions. It is, therefore, essential to meditate also on *Visuddhi Kendra* (No. 5), and seek its regulatory power. Both these centres are closely related and both must be activated simultaneously. If this is done, one is endowed with brilliance, is full of vitality and his responses to instincts are well regulated and controlled.

1. Glands—Our Invisible Guardians, pp 39, 40.

2. *Ibid*, p. 33

Centres of Health & Vitality (*Svāsthya Kendra & Śakti Kendra*)

The bottom end of the spine is called *mūlādhāra* or *Śakti Kendra*. It is the centre of vital energy. All our vital energy is stored here. It is generated and distributed from this centre. Concentration of conscious mind on this centre will cause the muscles around the anal opening to contract. By pulling the rectum inside and contracting the muscles, the flow of vital energy is directed upwards. This is the root centre.

Svāsthya kendra is situated in the lower abdomen. It is the field of gonads or sex-glands. It is the centre for manifestation of sexual vitality—*libido*. It is also responsible for maintaining general health and vitality of the body. The hormonal output from gonads together with the sexual virility controls and regulates the general health. The mental and emotional health of a person depends upon the proper regulation and harmonization of this centre.

If these two centres—*Svāsthya* and *Śakti Kendras*—are properly activated and kept under strict control of self-discipline, then growth and development will be natural and adequate. This will also help in the development of the highest centre by receiving proper bio-energy and adequately rich vascular supply. It is, therefore, necessary to activate these centres by meditation. Perception of these two centres must always be followed by the perception of the upper centres so that the instincts are controlled and not over-stimulated.

Centre of Celibacy (*Brahma Kendra*)

The tip of the tongue is the field of this centre. Meditation on this centre assists one to observe celibacy without problem. As a rule, each of our sense-organs is related to one of the motor-organs. Thus the five sense-organs and their relative motor-organs would be :

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| nose | bowels |
| tongue | sex-organ |
| eyes | feet |
| skin | hands |
| ears | speech |

In this way, the tongue is closely related to the genitals and both are related to water element. Sexual activity will be enhanced if the tongue is pampered with tasty food and drinks. Fluids particularly stimulate both organs. Discipline in the intake of food and drinks in general and in spicy ones in particular coupled with perception of the tip of the tongue will go a long way to maintain sex-discipline. During the perception-exercise, the tongue is kept hanging in the oral cavity without touching anywhere in the mouth. The attention is focused on the tip and sensations are experienced.

- 1 Discipline of oral intake,
- 2 Motionless state of the tongue,
- 3 Relaxation of the tongue,
- 4 Observance of silence, and
- 5 Perception of these centres.

All these are conducive to a higher degree of self-discipline.

Centre of Vigilance (*Apramāda Kendra*)

Our ears and the area surrounding them is the field of this centre. Meditation on this centre enhances vigilance and inhibits *pramāda* (remissness). Addiction results from *pramāda*. Hence perception of this centre is an excellent means of becoming free from addiction. Russian scientists have made successful experiment of giving electric impulses in this area for riddance of addiction. Popular gesture of admitting forgetfulness is to pull one's ear (s). "Catch him by the ears", is the standard punishment for petty mischief. All these are subtle ways of influencing this centre. Perception (*pieksā*) of this centre strengthens the nerve-centre in this area, and increases the memory power. Transmutation of the delusive pleasures of addiction results in permanent freedom from addiction.

Centre of Vital Energy (*Prāna Kendra*)

To meditate on 'the tip of the nose' is an ancient ritual. It is the main gate of *prāna*—vital energy. Meditating on this centre enhances control on the flow of vital energy. Precognition, telepathy and such other extra-sensory-

perceptions are some of the other benefits derived from meditation on this centre. It is an important centre for learning deep concentration. Memory power can also be developed and increased.

Centre of Vision (*Chāksusa Kendra*)

This centre is very powerful for effortless concentration of mind. Direct contact with the brain-electricity can be established. It is also a centre of vitality, and meditation on this centre increases longevity.

Conclusion

These are some of the benefits derived from meditation on individual centre. We shall now discuss the effect of meditation on the whole chain of psychic centres collectively.

Physical Benefits

Perception of psychic centres will bring about changes in the chemistry of the body. For integrated development of personality, it is necessary to bring about radical changes in the body-chemistry, i.e. the chemical secretions in the body should be more balanced. The hormones of pituitary and adrenals are mainly responsible for this. When the mood and emotion-producing hormones from the adrenals are properly regulated and harmonized by those of pituitary, the equilibrium of the body-chemistry is more balanced. If the practice of meditation does not bring about desired equilibrium, then it must be concluded that the technique is not properly followed.

Secondly, there are hundreds of electro-magnetic fields in our body that excite our consciousness. All of them must be decontaminated. If they are not free from contamination and remain soiled up, the rays of knowledge cannot emanate from them, and one's knowledge can't be included in the category of wisdom. Wisdom becomes active when the areas in the body activating consciousness are totally unstained.

Mental Benefits

Next to the chemical equilibrium is the mental equilibrium. Normally, any condition of stress or excitement

upsets the mental balance. For instance, one is puffed up with the slight public admiration one may enjoy. If there is no mental equilibrium, even a minute event may assume mountainous proportions. On the other hand, with the mental equilibrium, gravest situations can be tackled peacefully. Mental equilibrium will become more and more balanced with meditational practice. This is an important benefit derived from the perception of psychic centres.

Psychic Benefits

Change in Habits

Next, we consider the psychic benefits derived from meditation. The basic improvement is the change in habits i.e. transmutation of attitude and behaviour. If one practises meditation systematically and regularly, it must have profound effect on one's emotional nature. The psychological distortions such as cruelty, retaliation, greed, hate, jealousy, deceit, haughtiness and aggression are sure to be reduced in intensity as a result of meditation.

The change is due to the harmonization of the endocrines. When the flow of psychic attention is diverted from navel, lower abdomen and genitals towards heart, throat, nose tip, forehead and cranium, there is blissful hormonal influence on our mental states and behaviour as a result of which the bad habits begin to disappear. There is a natural subsidence in the intensity of the bad habits, because the hormonal synthesization which nourished them is withdrawn and the psychological dynamite is defused.

The perception of psychic centres does eradicate psychological distortions. But this does not mean that the total change is instantaneous. The long process of eradication of the evil commences with the commencement of the practice.

Change of Heart

As stated above, the effect of meditational practice is 'change'. It is not a mere superficial change like the change of dress or wearing a face-mask, but it is profound—it is the 'change of heart'.

The change of heart, thus, positively results from the perception of psychic centres. There are a number of centres

in our body. The meditational exercise could be in the form of perception of individual centre or in the form of collective perception or cyclic perception. In any case, as soon as our psychic attention is focused on a centre, its activity begins to become balanced and its chemical output is changed.

To use an analogy—what used to be the special agents or spies of the enemy (*karma śarīra*) change side and defect to become the agents of the psyche. The change is primal and in the root itself.

Since all the primal urges are endocrine expressions, transmutation of the hormonal synthesization must bring about a fundamental change in the attitudes themselves. Let us consider the history of a chain-smoker who participated in a *prekṣā dhyāna śivīra* (a ten-day residential course). Before coming to the *śivīra*, whenever he was told about the dangerous risks of cigarette-smoking such as lung-cancer, emphysema, etc., he used to argue (illogically, of course), "whatever is produced in the world is surely for our pleasure, otherwise why are they produced at all? If all stop smoking, the cigarette factories would have to be closed down and it will be a great national loss", and so on. It is clear from such illogical arguments that any amount of logic would not succeed in convincing him to abstain from smoking. Fortunately, he joined a training *śivīra*, learnt the *prekṣā* system of meditation, and made good progress in learning the technique of perception of psychic centres. His hormonal synthesization began getting transmuted. This had a profound effect on his nervous system and mental state. The insistence of the demand of the addiction weakened and was ultimately destroyed. Not only did he stop smoking, but got nauseated when others smoked in his vicinity. This can illustrate change at the root—the change of heart.

Psychic Centre, Karana and Clairvoyance

~~It has already been stated that the whole body is full of psychic centres.~~ A special benefit accruing from the perception of body and that of psychic centres is clairvoyance—an E.S.P. capability. A clairvoyant 'sees' with the whole

body or some specific portion(s) of the body which is called *karana*. The instrument of all perceptions—sensory as well as extra-sensory—are situated within the body. That is, the special capability of clairvoyance must also manifest itself from within the body (not outside). Our normal perceptive ability is restricted to the use of our sense-organs, sensory outposts and nervous system, the *karana* centres of the body being not activated. As a result of the meditational practice the *karana* centres become purified and active. Theoretically each specialised cell is a potential *karana*. If decontaminated and grain-oriented, it has the capacity to act as a *karana*. For example, if the special sensory cells situated in the left shoulder (or the right one) are activated, the clairvoyant would be able to 'see' with his left (or right) shoulder as the case may be. If, on the other hand, the front portion of the body or some psychic centre in the spinal cord is activated and converted into a *karana*, he would be able to 'see' from the front or the back respectively. Similarly, if the top of the head—cerebral cortex—becomes a *karana*, he would 'see' by the top of his head. All these are instances of partial clairvoyance. In full clairvoyance, one is able to perceive by the whole body—right, left, back, front and top.

Various Shapes of *Karana*

We come across two terms—*kamala* (lotus) and *cakra* (wheel) in the ancient Yoga philosophy. That is, we have *nābhi kamala* (navel-lotus), *hṛdaya-kamala* (heart-lotus), *manipūra cakra*, *anāhata cakra* and so on. According to the Jain Philosophy, when a portion of the body is purified to become a *karana*, its shape is symmetarised to become not only *kamala* or *cakra*, but many other auspicious beautiful shapes also, such as *svastika*, *nandyāvarta*, *kalaśa*, etc. So long as they are contaminated, their shapes are asymmetrical and ugly, but as soon as they are purified and activated, they change their shapes and become symmetrical and beautiful.

Three-fold Benefits of Perception of Psychic Centres

- (i) Decontamination of psychic centres
- (ii) Stimulation of centre of joy

- (iii) Release of the flow of the vital energy which is blocked up or not free-flowing.

(i) Decontamination of Psychic Centres

In the ancient folklore, we read about bejewelled blanket (*ratna-kambala*). This could not be washed with water, but had to be steam-cleaned (dry-cleaning). Our psychic centres are also like this mythical blanket. They can be purified not by ordinary washing, but by fire. When one concentrates and focuses full attention on a centre, the flow of vital energy through the vascular mechanism and an electric current through the enervating one are so powerful that all contamination is wiped out and the centre is electro-magnetically grain-oriented. Thus purified, the centre is able to radiate the psychic energy which has E S P. capabilities. In day-to-day life also, we know that whenever a source of light, be it a lantern, an electric bulb, or a tube-light, is covered with dirt, the light emitted is not bright and powerful. Again, if a red or yellow-coloured cellophane paper covers the bulb, the emitted light is also red or yellow. In the same way, as long as our psychic centres are contaminated, the psychic brilliance is not revealed. Hence it is essential to wash out the contamination from these centres. Perception of body is also a process of decontamination. Perception of psychic centre is more powerful because the flow of vital energy is stronger and the centres are cleansed further.

(ii) Stimulation of the Centre of Joy

We now come to a very important benefit, viz. stimulation of the Centre of Joy i.e. producing a state of euphoria without the use of harmful habit-forming drugs. Centres of pain, pleasure, euphoria, bliss etc. are located in the brain. Stimulation of each centre will produce pain, pleasure etc. These centres have been scientifically mapped out¹. Stimuli from an injured or affected part of the body will reach and stimulate the centre of pain through electrical impulses and chemical *neuro* transmitters. The result is suffering. Thus

1. Two special regions in the brain, particularly in the limbic system—seat of our emotions—are known to be involved in pain regulation: the medial thalamus and periaqueductal grey matter often known as the PAG.

the perception of pain occurs in the brain and not in the skin or at the site of the injury. Similarly, when other centres are stimulated, the result is pleasure, euphoria, bliss, etc.¹

Now, it has been well established by the recent research efforts that chemical substances, having the same effect as powerful pain-killers, such as morphine, are secreted internally and block out the pain. That the brain manufactures hormones to regulate its own emotions, moods and drives is a recent dramatic discovery².

The pain-killing action of morphine is produced by endorphine and its concentration in PAG³ and amygdala can soothe pain and produce euphoria. An experienced practitioner, can produce this internal pain-killer at will and direct its concentration at proper regions either to soothe the pain or produce euphoria.

Thus it is possible not to suffer the misery of pain or grief by activating appropriate centres. Thousands have

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1. Narcotics—morphine and its faster acting derivative heroin—are opiates. The former is used medically for its pain-killing action, the latter is marketed illicitly for its euphoric effect. But the joy conceals its sorrow—a hideous addiction. The narcotics may concentrate in PAG and to an even greater degree in the AMYGDALA which plays a crucial role in emotional arousal and euphoria. Perhaps this accounts for the euphoric high that the addicts seek from their drug fix.
 2. In mid seventies, researchers have been successful in isolating the following substances—
 - (a) Enkephalin (meaning in the head)—an opiate like peptide produced by the brain
 - (b) Endorphine (meaning the morphine within)
 - (c) Beta-endorphine, a complex peptide synthesized from beta-likotrope (a precursor of enkephalin) and endorphine and some amino acids
 3. PAG perhaps is where the brain turns off its perception of pain in situations of stress—such as fright, flight, combat etc. when pain might hinder performance. This means that some analgesic like endorphine reaches the PAG cells from other neurons to soothe pain. A high concentration of this hormone in the amygdala, on the other hand, may act as the body's own tonic against disappointment and may produce euphoric high.

demonstrated this state of bliss¹ under most painful conditions, both physical and psychological.

Perception of psychic centres can activate the centres of euphoria and bliss. An addict can get rid of this hideous affliction by regular practice of this exercise.

(iii) The third benefit is the reinforcement of the vital energy. We can stimulate the centre of vital energy in our body by the perception of psychic centres.

Centres of vital energy, general health, bioelectricity and purity are all related to our subtle electrical body. The premeditational exercise of internal trip and the perception of spinal cord directs the flow of vital energy upward, and brings it to the centre of wisdom from the centre of energy via the spinal cord.

Thus the bio-energy generated in the nether centres can be tapped by meditation of psychic centres and utilised for spiritual uplift.

All the above-mentioned benefits accrue from the regular and systematic perception of psychic centres.

Anger, haughtiness, sexual arousal, selfishness, jealousy, fear and hatred—all these emotional urges are aroused when our psyche roams about the navel region. It is quite normal for this to happen because we do not know the outcome of this. But we know that it is beneficial to keep psychic attention in the upper regions above the heart and throat and up in the cranium. If our attention is repeatedly concentrated in these upper regions, our urges and distortions would be regulated, amenable to control and can even be transmuted. Our 'libido' can then be put to creative activity.

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1. Among the most important part of the brain's pleasure reward system is a pair of tiny blue specks called the locus coeruleus or 'blue spot'. A rat with an electrode implanted there will spend its days and nights pressing a lever that stimulates this centre of pleasure (and bliss) forsaking food, drink and sleep. The locus coeruleus is loaded with enkapheline molecules. Says Dr. James L. McGaugh, Executive Vice-Chancellor of the University of California, Irvine, "Endorphine and enkaphaline really constitute a new chapter in neuro science."

All footnotes are based on an article "Chemistry of the Mind" by David N. Leff, published in *Span*, June, 1980, pp. 41-44

This results in attitudinal change and development of an integrated personality. This then is the key for change of attitude and behaviour, and building up of character.

Social Health

Meditational practice also changes moral and social values and standards.

If the attitude and behaviour of a practitioner and a non-practitioner are identical, meditation would be futile. But the change in attitude and behaviour must also change social outlook.

He who practises the perception of psychic centres regularly, would positively adopt an attitude of equanimity, and his behaviour would radically change. Having got rid of psychological distortions, his behaviour would be free from irrational fear, lust, cruelty, vindictiveness etc. His way of life—personal as well as social—would be full of compassion, modesty and honesty.

When we consider social health, it is necessary that the harsh treatment meted out to some unfortunates such as drug-addicts and anti-socials, should be replaced by compassion. Actually, they are sick people and like any other sick, have little control over their malady. The injustice done to them causes an irreparable damage to their psyches. The root cause of the suffering body by the anti-socials and the society is the imbalance of the neuro-endocrine system of the unfortunate victims. The obvious remedy is to restore the equilibrium.

The society must, first of all, change its attitude towards the so-called anti-socials from cruelty to compassion. The victims should instead of being sent to the prisons be sent to health-centres where they could be treated with the psycho-therapy based on the meditational practice such as *Preksā-dhyāna*.

One cannot over-emphasize the simple fact that the social health is the result of emotional health of the constituents of the society. The practice of the perception of psychic centres is a simple remedy for restoring the emotional health of the constituents of the society. There is no other remedy

as simple and as economic as meditational therapy. Some pessimists may insist that it is impossible to subjugate the forces of the primal drives, and eradicate the distortions from one's attitude and behaviour. But such pessimism is proved to be baseless and irrelevant by the actual results obtained by the meditational therapy. It is true that the social health cannot be restored overnight. Regular and constant practice is needed not only to restore but to maintain it. It would require establishment of proper facilities where the emotionally sick members of society can be taught to heal themselves and maintain their emotional health by the development of the inherent potency by knowing how to live properly which includes eating, drinking, and breathing properly as well as thinking properly.

